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Evaluation

UNDP follow-up to management responses to independent and decentralized evaluations*

Summary

UNDP submits the present report in compliance with the request contained in Executive Board decision 2008/17 (paragraph 10) regarding the annual report on evaluation, which is in line with ongoing UNDP efforts to further improve its use of evaluations to deliver better development results. The report provides an overview of the status of implementation of key actions in management responses to independent evaluations, as well as to mandatory outcome evaluations at the decentralized level. The report also attempts to illustrate where progress has been made and where further action is needed in follow-up to management responses.

* The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed submission of the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. At its annual session 2008, the Executive Board "*[u]rge[d]* UNDP to continue to improve its use of evaluation to support learning and a culture of results, and *request[ed]* UNDP to provide a report to the Board on its follow-up to management responses, including follow-up actions on decentralized evaluations, at the annual session 2009". The present report responds to that request. It was prepared by the UNDP Executive Office, based on statistical information available in the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) database (erc.undp.org) and summary assessments prepared by the relevant bureaux/units on their follow-up to management responses to both independent and decentralized evaluations. Bureaux/units were asked to provide an overview of the systems and processes that have been put in place to ensure and monitor such follow-up.

2. The evaluation policy of UNDP states that "the evaluations conducted by UNDP fall into two categories: independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, and decentralized evaluations managed by country offices, regional bureaux and practice and policy bureaux, and conducted by external experts. Together they represent a coherent system of evaluation that provides the necessary coverage to manage for results and to support organizational accountability". Independent evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office include strategic evaluations and programmatic evaluations, which fall into two categories: (a) global, regional and South-South programme evaluations, and (b) assessments of development results. Decentralized evaluations include outcome evaluations and project evaluations.

3. The present report provides a statistical overview of the status of implementation of key actions in management responses to independent evaluations since the Executive Board approved the evaluation policy in its decision 2006/20. The policy states that "all evaluations will have a management response". The report also provides a statistical overview of the status of implementation of key actions in management responses to mandatory outcome evaluations at the decentralized level in 2008 which is the first year of the strategic plan period and of implementation of the UNDP accountability system. Project evaluations are not covered, as they are not mandatory except when required by a partnership protocol. The conduct of planned outcome evaluations provides the basis for determining evaluation compliance in UNDP at the decentralized level, in accordance with the reporting requirements enumerated by the Evaluation Office in its annual report to the Board.

4. Table 2 reflects the decentralized evaluations uploaded by country offices into the ERC database as of 16 March 2009. The status of key actions for the evaluations listed was drawn from the ERC on 24 March 2009.

5. A short overview is provided of the systems and processes that UNDP has put in place at different levels to follow up on management responses and use evaluation findings to support learning and a culture of results.

6. The summary assessments provided in the annex were prepared by the relevant bureaux/units to illustrate where progress has been made in following up on management responses and where further action is needed.

II. Statistical overview

Table 1. Status of implementation of management responses to independent evaluations

Evaluation	Management response uploaded to ERC	Key actions planned	Status of key actions		
			Completed/ ongoing*	Initiated/ pending	Overdue
2006					
Joint assessment: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)-UNDP cooperation agreement phase	Yes	5	4	1	
Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries	Yes	19	10	8	1
Evaluation of national human development report system	Yes	28	12	16	
Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami	Yes	72	69	3	
Assessment of development results (ADR), Montenegro	Yes	14	11	3	
ADR, Lao People's Democratic Republic	Yes	29	27	2	
ADR, Serbia	Yes	12	12		
2007					
Evaluation of results-based management in UNDP	Yes	15	15		
Evaluation of the second regional cooperation framework (RCF) for Latin America and the Caribbean (2002-2006)	Yes	27		22	5
Evaluation of the second RCF for Asia and the Pacific (2002-2006)	Yes	6	5	1	
Evaluation of RCF for Africa, 2002-2006	Yes	19	8	4	7
Global Environment Facility (GEF) evaluation of activity cycle and modalities	Yes	5	5		
ADR Bhutan	Yes	23	23		
ADR Jordan	Yes	43	43		
ADR Colombia	Yes	33	27	6	
ADR Nicaragua	Yes	26	26		
2008					
Evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy	Yes	15	10	5	
Evaluation of the third global cooperation framework	Yes	19	10	9	
Joint evaluation of the UNDG contribution to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness	Yes	4	4		
Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme	Yes	7	7		
Evaluation of the role of UNDP in the net contributor countries of the Arab region	Yes	27	4	16	7
Evaluation of UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation	Yes	12	12		
ADR Republic of Congo	Yes	20	7	9	4
ADR Rwanda	No				
ADR Ecuador	Yes	6	5	1	
ADR Benin	Yes	12	6	6	

Source: ERC management response dashboard (erc.undp.org) as of 24 March 2009.

* Please note that in the management response, there is an option to enter actions as 'ongoing'. Such actions have no set deadline for completion, but the responsible units are already implementing. Therefore, they are considered 'completed' for the reporting purposes

Table 2. Status of implementation of management responses to mandatory outcome evaluations at the decentralized level

Outcome evaluations, 2008	Management response uploaded in ERC	Key actions planned	Status of key actions		
			Completed/ ongoing*	Initiated/ pending	Overdue
Cameroon. Evaluation finale du projet d'appui à la protection et à la régénération de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles pour un développement durable	Yes	(To be entered correctly in ERC)			
Uganda. Midterm outcome evaluation of the UNDP poverty reduction programme, 2006-2007	Yes	8	5	3	
Afghanistan. 'Outcome 5' evaluation	Yes	(Key actions are in the process of being entered in ERC)			
Bangladesh. Survival and development rights of vulnerable groups are ensured within an environmentally sustainable Framework	Yes	12	8	4	
Philippines. Outcome evaluation: achieving MDGs and reducing poverty Portfolio	Yes	9	5	4	
Philippines. Outcome evaluation: energy and environment portfolio	Yes	18	14	4	
Philippines. Outcome evaluation: democratic governance portfolio	Yes	10	9	1	
Armenia. "Participatory policy-making among targeted groups is promoted" outcome evaluation	Yes	1		1	
Georgia. Access to sustainable energy	Yes	3	1	1	1
Kyrgyzstan. Midterm evaluation of poverty reduction (local initiatives and pro-poor policy development) outcomes	Yes	5	2	3	
Ecuador. Evaluación del impacto de los proyectos dirigidos a la conservación y uso sostenible de la biodiversidad	Yes	7	7		
Peru. Establecimiento de capacidades de prevención y manejo de conflictos a nivel de Gobierno central y regiones, a través de la aplicación de herramientas para la identificación y gestión de conflictos y fortalecimiento del dialogo democrático.	Yes	1	1		
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Incorporación de indicadores socioeconómicos y de servicios ecológicos	Yes	(To be entered correctly in ERC)			

Source: The decentralized evaluations listed here reflect those uploaded to the ERC as of 16 March 2009. The status of key actions for these evaluations was the ERC on 24 March 2009.

* In the management response, there is an option to enter actions as 'ongoing'. Such actions have no set deadline for completion, but the responsible units are already implementing. Therefore, they are considered as completed for the purpose of reporting.

III. Internal systems for follow-up to management responses

7. UNDP is committed to improving its use of evaluations to support accountability and deliver better development results, and recognizes, in that regard, the importance of the management response system.

8. Twice a year, the Evaluation Office presents an update on recurring issues and emerging trends in evaluations to the Operations Group, a twice-monthly bureau directors' meeting under the chairmanship of the Associate Administrator. This provides an opportunity for UNDP senior management to reflect on progress and challenges in the evaluation practice and to decide on actions to address those challenges. In compliance with the established procedure for preparing management responses, the Operations Group reviews and discusses all management responses to independent strategic evaluations, as well as management responses to global, regional and South-South programme evaluations. In reviewing each management response, the Operations Group focuses on ensuring that the weaknesses and challenges identified in the evaluation will be properly addressed and that lessons learned will be applied and integrated in new programming. Whenever possible, the Operations Group reviews the management response to independent evaluations of ongoing global and regional programmes at the same time as it discusses draft programme documents for the subsequent programming cycle, so as to facilitate learning and incorporation of evaluation findings into the design of new programmes.

9. The roles and responsibilities for the preparation of and follow-up to management responses to independent evaluations are specified in the 'Evaluation' section under 'Programme and Project Management' in the online UNDP programme and operations policies and procedures. The Bureau/unit that has been assigned the responsibility of preparing the management response to an evaluation is also responsible for posting it to the ERC database, tracking the status of implementation of the key actions, and updating the ERC database regularly. Mechanisms vary from Bureau/unit to Bureau/unit and include tasking divisions, units or committees with ensuring regular follow-up to management responses, in consultation with the relevant senior managers.

10. In the case of assessments of development results, the country office is responsible for such actions, under the oversight and guidance of the relevant regional bureau. Evaluation focal points at the regional bureau and country office levels provide the requisite technical support.

11. All regional bureaux have systems in place to guide and support country offices in preparing management responses to mandatory outcome evaluations at the decentralized level and integrating evaluation recommendations into the design of new strategic programming instruments. While the country office takes the lead in implementing the management response, guidance and support are typically provided through the concerned country division or programme advisor in the regional bureau in headquarters. In addition, the regional bureau evaluation focal point provides evaluation policy guidance, as needed, monitors information in the ERC database, and coordinates with the Evaluation Office. Regular oversight by regional bureaux is facilitated by the UNDP results-based management platform, which provides integrated access to country office development plans, monitoring activities and results-oriented annual reports. Regional bureau analysis of this information is used for corporate reporting, as well as inputs into regular country office monitoring visits and country office performance reviews.

12. Experience shows that dedicated monitoring and evaluation support is valuable in ensuring that lessons learned from evaluations are integrated in strategic programme planning. While the number of monitoring and evaluation specialists and units has increased (replacing the focal point arrangements in some places), UNDP recognizes that resources allocated for monitoring and evaluation at the country level are insufficient. Senior management is committed to finding ways to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacity throughout the organization. In some cases, dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialists have been recruited by regional service centres as a means of providing assistance to country offices.

13. Regional bureaux are reporting stricter compliance with the requirement that all new country programmes be accompanied by an evaluation plan, the quality and adequacy of which are reviewed at the Bureau Programme Advisory Committee in conjunction with the review and clearance of new country programmes.

14. In fulfillment of Executive Board decision 2006/9, which requests UNDP to provide "country and regional programme results and performance data consolidated over the programme duration", efforts are being made to ensure that the previous country programme is sufficiently evaluated through independent and/or decentralized evaluations prior to the submission of a new country programme document. In cases where no assessment of development results has been undertaken, a summary of evaluation findings is included in the country programme performance summary that accompanies the submission of all draft country programme documents.

15. While the systems in place have led to progress in the submission and tracking of management responses to evaluations at the headquarters, regional and country office levels, further efforts are needed and will be made to ensure stricter compliance with the management response system, as a key element of the UNDP commitment to a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning across the organization.

Annex. Summaries of follow-up actions

A. Follow-up to management responses to independent evaluations for the period 2006 to 2008

Follow-up to management responses to independent evaluations in 2006

16. *Joint assessment: UNIDO-UNDP cooperation agreement.* The joint United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)-UNDP management response identified three joint activities where UNDP was responsible for follow-up. These were: (a) Setting up a UNDP-UNIDO task force to guide future implementation and address key issues raised by the evaluation; (b) UNDP agreeing to waive the support costs for 15 UNIDO 'desks' included in the pilot phase for the first two years of their existence; and (c) Increasing efforts to work jointly on private sector development and other projects and programmes, including through joint funds mobilization. Two of the three activities have been implemented. The joint UNDP-UNIDO task force was set up and has been meeting regularly, and UNDP has waived support costs for the UNIDO desks. The third action is in progress. For its part, UNIDO was tasked with two follow-up items, namely: Expanding UNIDO desks to a total of 30 by end of 2009; and developing a sustainable funding mechanism for the UNIDO desks.

17. *Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries.* Nineteen key management actions were planned in response to this evaluation, of which six were completed in 2008. The remaining actions are ongoing, including recommendations requiring continued implementation. A strategic vision for assistance to conflict-affected countries was finalized in consultation with the Executive Board and integrated into the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. Completed and ongoing actions include: fostering more coherent inter-agency collaboration to strengthen joint planning structures for political and peacekeeping missions, engaging with the Bretton Woods Institutions and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in connection with post-crisis assessments, multi-donor trust funds and state-building initiatives; completion, in 2008, of the policy paper *Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration in Post-Conflict Settings* and the *Post-Conflict Economic Recovery Report*; launch of a global rule-of-law programme to better respond to country demand, including vis-à-vis gender-based violence and access to justice for women; strengthening gender programming by integrating gender budgeting into programmes; increasing capacity to respond to country needs through the 'surge' deployment mechanism; finalization of the policy on the establishment of sub-offices to support local-level programming; and ongoing engagement with civil society through the small-grants pilot.

18. *Evaluation of national human development report system.* Evaluation findings were widely disseminated within UNDP and to key partners. According to the management response to this evaluation, during 2007-2008 the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) organized a global discussion on ways to improve the quality of national human development reports and strengthen synergies with UNDP programmes. HDRO continued to produce support materials such as the human development measurement primer and to develop staff competencies to apply the human development approach, (such as through regional workshops in Africa on human development measurement; on the Millennium Development Goals in Europe; and a two-week course for UNDP staff in Oxford). An online human development course will be launched in 2009. Joint research with UNDP regional bureaux was undertaken for the Human Development Report 2009. Other activities include continuous dialogue within the organization to apply the human development approach to UNDP programming; enhance regional level support to national human development reports; revise United Nations Development Group materials; and establish better mechanisms for HDRO to support country offices directly. A recent UNDP Management Group discussion on this issue resulted in prioritized measures needed in the short and longer term.

19. *Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami.* The management response to the tsunami evaluation coalition report was finalized in November 2006, almost two years after the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 and approximately six months after the publication of the evaluation. Most of the key required actions described in the report had already been implemented by that time. With the February 2007 conclusion of the two-year mandate of the Special Envoy for tsunami recovery, tsunami response and monitoring in the five countries most affected by the disaster (India, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand) were integrated into regular UNDP country programming and implementation. UNDP prepared periodic reviews of the progress of national capacity-strengthening, coordination and recovery in key sectors to inform the Secretary-General's reports to ECOSOC in 2007 and 2008. The July 2008 report was the final such report. UNDP has prepared a 'lessons learned' report from the experience of the five most-affected countries, which will be launched this year.

Montenegro – assessment of development results

20. The management response consists of 15 key actions, of which 12 have been completed and three are under implementation. The country office has taken steps to become a strategic partner to the Government and to the European Commission with respect to its Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. That process has been ongoing since 2006, with an expectation that by 2010 there will be clarity as to what form the cooperation will take.

21. In response to the recommendation to strengthen the strategic management and business planning processes, UNDP Montenegro has developed and signed both the first country programme document and the first country programme action plan with the Government, in line with the national priorities. UNDP has expanded collaboration with other United Nations organizations in the country in efforts to initiate joint programming activities and develop the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework UNDAF) for Montenegro.

22. Programmatically, the country office has developed an anti-corruption project and an area-based development initiative in the north, focusing on spatial planning, sustainable tourism and environmental hot spots remediation. Through the subregional environmental initiative, the country office has positioned itself as a knowledge base and implementation centre for the subregion. This has all been ensured through continued capacity strengthening of the country office, with a special focus on operations and streamlining business processes.

23. *Lao People's Democratic Republic – assessment of development results.* The 2006 assessment and management response process has been a means for the country office to systematically capture lessons learned and build on the experiences of the previous country programme. The recommendations of the assessment were integrated into the formulation of the current country programme (2007-2011). Of the 29 actions contained in the management response, five have been completed: formulation of a comprehensive aid coordination project to support the roundtable process; organization of high-level seminars on sound natural resource management; reestablishing a country office gender focal team to strengthen gender mainstreaming; ensuring inclusion of capacity development as a key component of aid effectiveness in the 2006 Vientiane Declaration and Action Plan; and improving participatory planning through review of relevant manuals and tools of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. The country office is closely monitoring the remaining longer-term actions, which will be completed by the end of the current country programme.

Serbia – assessment of development results

24. The management response consists of 12 key actions, of which 10 have been completed and two are under implementation. The country office has been working to sharpen its focus, in line with the European Union accession priorities, and to increase national ownership.

25. In 2008, the country office was restructured to improve the coherence of the programme and its alignment to the strategic plan, in accordance with the decreased core management budget. A monitoring unit was established to improve the strategic monitoring performance.

26. UNDP has increased its dialogue with the European Commission regarding the comparative advantage of UNDP vis-à-vis bilateral donors and the pre-accession context. Discussion of programme priorities with key bilateral donors, particularly Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, led to further clarification of the UNDP mandate in development areas not covered by the pre-accession package. The country office will undertake a review of its programme in mid-2009 to refine its alignment with the European Union accession process. UNDP continues to work at the local level and has mobilized funding for initiatives in southern Serbia.

Follow-up to management responses to independent evaluations in 2007

27. *Evaluation of results-based management in UNDP.* The UNDP management response is linked to a specific corporate exercise to enhance results-based management in UNDP. The expected results and the work plan of the initiative were designed to respond to recommendations of the evaluation. The Operations Support Group follows up regularly to update the management response for the evaluation, as the key actions are directly linked to the progress of the results-based management initiative. Of the 15 key actions contained in the management response, seven have been completed and eight are ongoing. None is overdue.

Evaluation of second regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean (2002-2006)

28. The evaluation has contributed to providing better strategic focus in the development of the regional programme document. The process was carried out in a consultative manner within the region. The key issues raised in the evaluation and the main recommendations included strengthening the knowledge management platform of the programme, enhancing network partnerships, ensuring adequate monitoring and evaluation, and building up a strong governance structure and country ownership to guide the regional programme.

29. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has since been developing an implementation plan that takes into consideration: (a) Knowledge management, capacity development, and dissemination of knowledge products and publications; (b) Strengthening the community of practice and partnerships by working with regional networks of country office focal points and experts; and (c) Monitoring and evaluation of the regional programme. The Regional Bureau has established regional thematic advisory panels for each focus area. These meet annually and are composed of regional experts, government officials and UNDP resident representatives, and practice unit directors from the Bureau for Development Policy and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

Evaluation of the second regional cooperation framework for Asia and the Pacific (2002-2006).

30. Management actions in response to the evaluation include the reduction of regional projects from 30 in the previous cycle to 14 for the 2008-2011 cycle, and of outcomes from 19 to 10. The monitoring and evaluation framework has been strengthened, with specific indicators and baseline information for all regional programmes. Gender has been integrated into all programmes. Efforts are under way to strike a better balance between the strategic focus and changing needs of the region through guidance provided by the Management Board of the Regional Service Centre, as well as consultations on emerging needs with individual country offices.

31. Results from the ongoing review of the regional service centres will address the remaining recommendations, including strengthening services provided to countries with a balance among production of knowledge products, capacity-building and policy advice. The 2008 appointment of a new Deputy Regional Director, based in Bangkok, is expected to strengthen the planning, monitoring and reporting of the regional programme and the regional service centres. All pending actions will be completed by the end of 2009.

32. *Evaluation of the regional cooperation framework for Africa (2002-2006).* The recommendations from the evaluation were taken into consideration by limiting the focus to four areas in the new programme document, and by decentralizing project implementation to the

subregional offices in Johannesburg and Dakar. Project implementation is not on schedule, however, due primarily to the lengthy process of project formulation, further delayed by the number and complexity of project locations and the number of stakeholders that had to be consulted. Several follow-up actions are therefore pending.

Global Environment Facility evaluation on activity cycle and modalities

33. This evaluation, undertaken by the GEF Evaluation Office jointly with the evaluation offices of the GEF organizations (UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and UNIDO), is primarily relevant to the operations of the GEF secretariat. The objectives of the evaluation were to: (a) identify and analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the GEF activity cycle and modalities; (b) identify ways to improve the efficiency of GEF procedures, operations, and systems; and (c) make recommendations for simplifying GEF operations.

34. UNDP and the other GEF partners participated in consultations led by the GEF secretariat to develop a simplified GEF project cycle. The new project cycle was approved by the GEF Council in June 2007. The changes in the project cycle initially caused delays in project development and implementation, a matter of considerable concern to many countries. This has been resolved and, in general, UNDP supports the changes made by the GEF secretariat, which have led to a more streamlined, efficient project cycle.

Bhutan – assessment of development results

35. The management response addressed eight of the recommendations made in the assessment and included a total of 23 key actions. Of these, 19 have been implemented. The following are some of the key actions taken: (a) Finalization of the UNDAF and a common United Nations country programme action plan (involving 14 United Nations organizations); (b) Launch of a 'Solutions Exchange Network', a multi-disciplinary platform to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices among 770 members; (c) Development of a Millennium Development Goals-consistent macroeconomic framework incorporated into the five-year plan of the Government; and (d) the preparation of the Millennium Development Goals needs assessment and costing report.

36. The four remaining actions will be completed by 2012. A key action to be implemented in 2009 is the rolling out of United Nations joint outcome evaluations, which will test some of the country programme action plan mechanisms put into place.

Jordan – assessment of development results

37. Progress has been made towards implementing all of the 43 actions identified in the management response, despite recent staff turnover and a UNDP- mandated relocation of premises. A more focused strategic direction has been defined through the 'strategic visioning for change' process initiated by the country office, including a refocused poverty/ Millennium Development Goals portfolio.

38. The aim of that process is to strengthen the oversight and management systems of the country office, sharpen programme focus and increase coherence, and improve the efficiency of UNDP services to ensure the relevance and quality of the support to the Government and other state institutions. UNDP is called upon to sustain the delivery of high-quality advisory capacities on strategic, policy, and institutional development aspects, although making progress on this front remains a challenge, pending the deployment of senior policy advisors. In addition, recently established mechanisms will improve coordination with other United Nations organizations and the donor community. The process has already provided greater inter-portfolio linkages, thereby addressing many of the recommendations of the assessment.

39. A clear country office oversight and management framework has been agreed, with detailed action plans for 2009, to ensure better accountability and higher-quality results for ongoing projects. A monitoring and evaluation associate was hired to improve timely compliance with the results-based management requirements.

Colombia – assessment of development results

40. The evaluation was instrumental to the overall review and realignment of the activities of the office and staff capacities to carry them out.

41. All the initiatives and projects implemented by the country office have been aligned with the priorities and outputs enumerated in the country programme document, and have a substantive focus. Development support services projects are in the process of being closed. Work is under way to ensure that African-descent and indigenous peoples are mainstreamed into UNDP activities. With support from BCPR, conflict prevention and recovery are being integrated into the country programme, and a strategic partnership with a value of $7.5 million has been signed. A strong substantive and coordinating role for the country office in the critical field of work with victims of the conflict with illegal armed groups has been developed and financed, with a multi-year basket fund, by eight donors. United Nations inter-agency work is much stronger than before, three 'MDG-Achievement Fund' projects having been approved with UNDP support and seven memoranda of understanding signed with United Nations organizations.

42. Challenges highlighted in the assessment, such as the country office capacity in monitoring and evaluation, are being addressed, with strengthening of staff capacity in some substantive areas and in strategic planning.

Nicaragua – assessment of development results

43. UNDP has implemented all the key actions identified in the management response, including two regarding micro-enterprises. Indicators for disaster management have also been completed.

44. The recommendations were taken into account during the formulation of the country programme document in 2007, and in subsequent programme formulation with the Government. The internal recommendations were useful for management and programme area restructuring. Some of the main activities undertaken include stressing the importance of human rights and gender issues in programming, advancing with the harmonized approach to cash transfers, and strengthening personnel to support programme implementation. In terms of programme issues, some focus areas have been adjusted due to a change in Government in 2007; however, the main recommendations of the assessment have been followed.

Follow-up to management responses to independent evaluations in 2008

45. *Evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy.* This evaluation was completed in mid-2008. It provided four recommendations, and UNDP management committed to undertake 15 key actions to address them. Of the key actions, one has been completed, five have been initiated, six are ongoing and three are pending. As part of the strategic planning process, UNDP has formulated strategic environment and energy priorities corresponding to UNDP mission and capabilities. Examples of key actions that have been initiated or are ongoing include (a) formulating strategic environment and energy priorities in response to national sustainable development goals; (b) helping incorporate environment and energy concerns into national development planning processes; (c) adding guidelines on environmental and social safeguards to the programme and operations policies and procedures guide; (d) continuing the implementation of the UNDP climate change strategy, and (e) establishing new posts and upgrading existing ones in regional service centres. Further actions will be initiated in 2009 and tracked to completion through 2011.

Evaluation of the third global cooperation framework (2005-2007), with a one-year extension (DP/2008/44)

46. The evaluation) included five recommendations. UNDP was asked to formulate a new global programme that clearly sets out its global role, development goals, strategic focus and corresponding results and accountability framework (recommendation 1). This was achieved when the Global Programme, 2009-2011, (DP/GP/2) was approved by the Executive Board at its second regular session 2008. The quality-assurance procedure approved by the Operations Group is

included in the UNDP programme and operations policies and procedures. A knowledge management strategy was designed and approved by internal UNDP oversight bodies (the 'ICT Board' and the 'RBM Board'). One challenge is the finalization of long-term agreements with regional bureaux, completion of which is expected by mid-2009.

47. Actions are under way to improve UNDP strategies and delivery mechanisms so that the fourth global programme can better support achievement of results at the country level (recommendation 2). Areas of service have been defined and a functional framework established, with practice leaders deployed to all regional service centres. Knowledge-sharing functions will be more explicitly built into the work of policy advisers and embedded in business processes throughout 2009, ensuring connections to country-level and global experiences and expertise. Long-term agreements with regional bureaux and implementation of the new regionalization structure allow a more integrated way of supporting institutional, regional and country-level needs. In relation to recommendation 3, a strategy to partner more systematically with the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation will be developed by the end of 2009. Initiatives are under way to partner systematically with other United Nations organizations, in order to contribute to development policy debates and approaches that are critical to programme countries for the achievement of their development goals.

48. In response to recommendations 4 and 5, a management system has been established and additional oversight controls are in place to strengthen results orientation, accountability and compliance with standard UNDP programming requirements. Management and advisory committees have been established. At the project level, project approval committees and project boards provide quality assurance and oversight. The workplan and results are integrated into the UNDP results-based management system, and an evaluation plan is available on the Evaluation Office website. Quarterly progress of project results can be tracked and evaluated, and emerging and evolving project-related risks can be identified and addressed. Guidance has been issued for the project approval and project board modalities. A mid-term review of the global programme will be conducted in 2010.

49. *Joint evaluation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) contribution to the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (first phase).* In 2006, UNDG agreed with donors and partner countries to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration between 2007 and 2010. The survey was undertaken voluntarily by members of UNDG (the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNAIDS, UNDP and UNFPA). While the management response limits itself to UNDP-specific issues, UNDP is collaborating with other UNDG members in reviewing the evaluation findings and recommendations.

50. In response to the evaluation, UNDP undertook the following actions: (a) Developed a global capacity-development project for aid effectiveness; (b) To strengthen the UNDP 'global aid effectiveness' community of practice, held the first global meeting in Jordan, in October 2009 (c) Opened the 'global aid effectiveness community of practice' network to United Nations system colleagues and external partners (over 300 members). (d) Obtained Executive Board approval to implement a pilot period for sector budget support and pooled funding; (e) Continued to lead within UNDG on aid effectiveness issues; (f) Successfully co-chaired the preparation groups for the Accra High-Level Forum and the Doha Conference, with the United Nations Children's Fund, resulting in joint UNDG delegations and joint statements.

51. UNDP is leading, with UNFPA, on the UNDG guidance note on engagement in the changing aid environment. A targeted workshop was held in February 2009. One key challenge will be to mainstream the principles of aid effectiveness into programming policy and procedures.

Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (joint evaluation)

52. In June 2006, the GEF Council requested that the GEF evaluation office undertake an independent evaluation of the Small Grants Programme, in which UNDP was invited to participate, given its role in implementing the Programme. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cost effectiveness, as well as the results of the Small Grants Programme in relation to the overall mandate of the GEF. The evaluation noted that the Programme has a slightly higher success rate in achieving global environmental benefits, and a significantly higher rate in sustaining them, than the GEF medium- and full-sized projects, demonstrating cost efficiency and programmatic results and relevance.

53. Of six recommendations emerging from the evaluation, three are being implemented (those related to management cost, country programme oversight including audit, and the monitoring and evaluation system). The management cost issue was officially followed up in the paper submitted to the GEF Council meeting in April 2008. The remaining three recommendations (suitable central management system for the new phase of growth of the Small Grants Programme, access to GEF resources, and the 'upgrading' policy) need to be addressed in relation to the future programme in the fifth phase of GEF (2010-2014) and beyond. To address those three recommendations, and as requested by the GEF Council, a further study is being conducted to contribute to the discussion at the GEF Council meeting in June 2009.

Evaluation of the role of UNDP in the net contributor countries of the Arab region

54. Eight recommendations and 27 actions were put forward in the management response. While advances have been made on a number of actions, progress is slow as most actions require a change in policies, processes, systems, and the way UNDP conducts business in the net contributor countries. The economic crisis has delayed negotiations with the governments of these countries with respect to implementing certain actions and agreeing on the way forward.

55. The following are some actions taken to date. The Regional Bureau for Arab States is now financially supporting four deputy resident representative posts in net contributor countries. The Regional Bureau organized for net contributor country offices and headquarters units a subregional learning initiative, held in Tripoli in January 2009, targeting national officers and operations staff to enhance their skills across the project cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation). Additionally, the workshop addressed substantive programmatic issues, including climate change, governance, water resource management, crises prevention, management and capacity development. In November 2008, the Regional Bureau and the Partnerships Bureau organized a discussion of partnership models and multilateral approaches with net contributor country resident representatives.

56. *Evaluation of UNDP contribution to South-South cooperation.* Of the 12 key actions identified in the management response, four have been implemented and eight are ongoing. Given the large number of units responsible for the different key actions in the management response, the Operations Support Group was asked to facilitate the overall process of preparing the response and monitoring its implementation. Responding to the need to better leverage its global knowledge network to advance South-South cooperation, UNDP in 2008 enhanced its results-based management system to capture the many ways in which country offices are already applying South-South solutions in implementing their programmes. In addition, the upgrading of the UNDP knowledge management platform, in 2009, will provide further opportunities to leverage such solutions for the benefit of programme countries.

57. *Republic of the Congo – assessment of development results.* Evaluation recommendations informed the formulation of the country programme document and were operationalized in the country programme action plan. The new country programme focuses its interventions on governance and pro-poor and community development, while phasing out post-conflict activities. Follow-up actions have been completed for most of the recommendations, although some delays have been reported in establishing UNDP satellite offices outside Brazzaville.

58. *Rwanda – assessment of development results*. Management responses have been prepared and uploaded for all six project evaluations for Rwanda for 2008 – indicating that the management response tool in ERC has been regularly used in the country office to track follow-up actions to evaluations such as aid coordination and harmonization; and information sharing, management and dissemination. However, at the time of writing the present report no management response had been shared with respect to the assessment. Follow-up is ongoing to ensure compliance in that regard.

Ecuador – assessment of development results

59. UNDP Ecuador has made considerable progress in adopting and starting the implementation of the assessment recommendations. The office is phasing out most of its 'legacy' projects in favor of a leaner, more strategic portfolio with aggressive cost-benefit and risk management analyses in its new interventions. The internal controls have been strengthened to ensure better programme development, management and oversight. The UNDAF/country programme document process provided an excellent opportunity to refine the responsiveness of the country office to national priorities and improve the quality of performance indicators.

60. The harmonized approach to cash transfers is being implemented, while support to nationally and directly executed projects is being reduced. Focusing on medium- and longer-term planning is a challenge in the current political environment, particularly given the effects of the economic crisis and its impact on funding for the national development plan. Inter-agency coordination continues through the established mechanisms and will be expanded through the implementation of the four approved UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund windows. The country office is developing further partnerships with civil society and the private sector.

61. *Benin – assessment of development results*. Evaluation recommendations informed the formulation of the country programme document and were operationalized in its action plan. The new country programme has sharpened its focus on three practice areas: poverty, environment, and governance. A programme management support unit was created in January 2009 to support programmes and enhance monitoring and evaluation. The country office is strengthening its partnerships with the private sector, donors, and government.

Follow-up to management responses to outcome evaluations at the decentralized level for the year 2008

62. *Cameroon – 'Evaluation finale du projet d'appui à la protection et à la régénération de l'environnement et aes ressources naturelles pour un développement durable'*. The evaluation recommended improved coordination among partners, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for sub-projects. In that regard, the roles and responsibilities of all partners were clarified, partners were involved at the formulation stage of the next phase of programming, and monitoring and evaluation functions were better articulated in the work plans.

63. *Uganda – Mid-term evaluation of the UNDP poverty reduction programme (2006-2007)*. In response to the evaluation, the country office is preparing five district Millennium Development Goals reports, which will be disseminated at the district level, to strengthen policy dialogue concerning the Goals. The country office is reorienting project activities to align them with relevant outputs in its 2009 annual work plan. The Management Support Unit has provided training to implementing partners to prepare and share guidelines on cross-cutting issues. The country office is embarking on joint programming with the International Labour Organization and UNIDO in 2009.

Afghanistan – Evaluation of outcome: enhanced government capacity for policy dialogue.

64. The country office is undertaking several actions to respond to the findings and recommendations made in the outcome evaluation (outcome 5), addressing particularly the weaknesses in policy coherence and synergies, by establishing outcome boards for all programme outcomes and widening participation in the project board. Policy advisory support will be enhanced by increasing in-house capacities and providing better quality assurance to the project

from the country office. Measures have been taken to strengthen complementarities (least-cost option by using in-house capacity) and better coordination of results by introducing a platform upon which projects can 'talk to each other'.

65. The UNDP field presence outside the capital will be further strengthened with support from UNAMA and through the development of well-coordinated, standard field protocols for better engagement with provincial and district authorities and communities.

66. *Bangladesh – Survival and development rights of vulnerable groups are ensured within an environmentally sustainable framework.* The evaluation made eight recommendations. In response, the country office identified 12 actions, eight of which have been implemented to date. Critical measures adopted include: (a) The formulation of a pro-poor strategic programme framework that reflects climate change and food security issues; (b) The undertaking of field assessments of the effectiveness of community-based natural resources management interventions; (c) Implementing a mid-term evaluation of the community-based coastal and wetland biodiversity project and formulating a follow-up ecosystem management strategy; (d) The demonstration of a community-based biodiversity conservation model, which has been scaled up and institutionalized by the Government for managing ecologically critical areas; (e) Supporting the establishment and strengthening of a national 'climate cell' and establishing the Sustainable Development Network as an independent foundation; (f) Strengthening programme linkages and formulating a comprehensive sustainable land management project; and (g) Mainstreaming environment and climate change concerns into the UNDP programme as well as into the 2008 national development plan. The remaining actions, to be completed in 2009, address environmental management at the local level, especially local-level implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

Philippines – Evaluations of outcomes on (a) achieving the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty; (b) energy and environment; and (c) democratic governance

67. The country office is undertaking a range of actions to respond to the three outcome evaluations completed in 2008. A new management support unit has been established at the country office. The evaluation recommendations were collectively addressed with the Government during the annual review of the country programme action plan in February 2009, and specific responses factored into the work-plans from 2009 onwards; all actions will be completed by the end of the programme cycle (2011).

68. There is a greater emphasis on cross-practice programming across all areas, shown in the adoption of the poverty and environment initiative; the formulation of a new HIV/AIDS programme linked to local governance; and the formulation of a multi-sectoral programme to address indigenous people's issues. There is a strengthened focus on gender, including a comprehensive gender audit of the programme, and on mainstreaming a human rights-based approach.

69. Ongoing actions for each of the outcome evaluations, respectively, include: (a) *Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction portfolio.* Developing a comprehensive inventory and assessment of social protection programmes, preparing a national social protection strategy; enhancing local government capacity through new tools such as the 'costing of local government units' options to achieve the Goals, and a community-based monitoring system for local development planning, implementation and monitoring; (b) *Democratic governance portfolio.* Expanding the existing human rights programme focus to include integrity and access to justice, and forging multi-stakeholder collaboration and new partnerships; and (c) *Environment and energy portfolio.* Consolidating pilot-level results into an integrated national risk-based environment and natural resources management approach to help enhance the capacities of local government units to confront climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

70. *Armenia – Evaluation of outcome: "Participatory policy-making among targeted groups is promoted".* Some recommendations raised by the evaluation were considered while developing the new country programme document, 2010-2015, particularly in the results section. The

desirability and possibility of having a separate sustainability plan for each intervention or project are under discussion. The monitoring and evaluation specialist keeps track of the management response follow-up to ensure implementation.

71. *Georgia – Evaluation of outcome "Access to sustainable energy improved through increased electricity production by using indigenous renewable energy resources, improved energy efficiency and the development of Georgia's energy corridor".* The management response includes three actions, all of which are being implemented. The status of implementation will be reviewed and updated annually. In response to the recommendations to focus on raising awareness of renewable energy and energy efficiency and continuing dialogue with the Government about creating an enabling environment for renewable energy and energy efficiency, UNDP substantively revised its large-scale UNDP/GEF renewable energy project, which puts strong emphasis on public outreach, expanded technical assistance, dialogue with the Government and rehabilitating small hydropower plants. Those recommendations will be taken into consideration during the new UNDAF and country programme cycle. Considerable efforts to mobilize resources for a large-scale rural energy project have not yet borne fruit, though there has been some donor interest. Additionally, UNDP is promoting renewable energy across its activities and will introduce these technologies in the settlements for internally displaced persons.

72. *Kyrgyzstan – Mid-term evaluation of poverty reduction (local initiatives and pro-poor policy development) outcomes.* Five key recommendations requiring implementation were adopted in the management response. Implementation is under way and due to be completed by the end of 2009. Areas where there has been progress include: (a) incorporation of the link between policy and grass-roots components; (b) establishment of substantive linkages with activities in the areas of democratic governance and the environment; (c) strengthening of the advocacy component in the annual work plan for 2009 and the public launching of the Millennium Development Goals progress report. The key remaining follow-up actions relate to: (a) documentation of the methodology of the donor coordination mechanism at the local level, based on the experience in pilot province; (b) strengthening the capacity of local government to coordinate donor activities; and (c) improvement of the monitoring and evaluation system.

Ecuador – 'Evaluación del impacto de los proyectos dirigidos a la conservación y uso sostenible de la biodiversidad'

73. To address the recommendations of the evaluation, UNDP Ecuador has increased its efforts to foster citizen participation in local environmental management, as well as to implement a national and regional policy to protect the rights of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation. The approach taken by the country office, based on demand-driven interventions and citizen participation, is a key factor in programming and implementing the cooperation provided to local and national stakeholders. Best practices on conserving world-renowned ecosystems are being systematized through a 'lessons learned' component in the control of invasive species project, which is funded by GEF and implemented by UNDP.

74. UNDP has started carrying out activities on mainland Ecuador in addition to the technical cooperation provided to the Galapagos archipelago. UNDP actively participates in a joint United Nations programme addressing the conservation and management of the natural and cultural heritage of the Yasuni biosphere reservation, including through a Small Grants Programme component focused on the selection of community projects that address the sustainable management of biodiversity.

75. UNDP has provided technical assistance to local governments in mainstreaming the control of invasive species in the local and regional development plans and in developing emergency contingency response plans.

76. *Peru – Evaluation of outcome 'Establecimiento de capacidades de prevención y manejo de conflictos a nivel de Gobierno central y regiones, a través de la aplicación de herramientas para la identificación y gestión de conflictos y el fortalecimiento del diálogo democrático'.* Between December 2008 and February 2009 the country office formulated and approved a programme to

support a culture of peace and the strengthening of national capacities for prevention and constructive management of conflict, in which it was envisioned that partnerships would be established among the President of the Council of Ministers (the implementing partner), the national Ombudsperson, governmental and nongovernmental institutions and other entities involved in the issue of conflict prevention and management. A main objective of the programme is to disseminate and analyse information about social conflict, as a means to help promote democratic governance. The programme responds directly to the recommendations of the evaluation, which called for promoting and establishing a mechanism for the systematization and exchange of experiences in participatory governance and conflict prevention and management between responsible officials in UNDP and its strategic partners in Peru.

77. *Venezuela – Evaluation of outcome 'Incorporación de indicadores socioeconómicos y de servicios ecológicos'*. The evaluation confirms the results achieved by the country office in incorporating socio-economic indicators into 71 per cent of the environmental project portfolio. It emphasizes the efforts made by the country office to incorporate indicators related to the provision of environmental goods and services. The evaluation recommended that UNDP shift its focus from the incorporation of environmental goods and services indicators to those related to environmental conservation and environmental quality management. That reorientation has been applied in 42 per cent of the project portfolio. A final issue mentioned in the evaluation is the need for the country office to undertake post-project impact evaluations, an activity for which it will need to obtain additional funding.